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PAX CHRISTI PORTUGAL

To SISTER MARY BETHY REISSEN
UN Representative Pax Christi Intern.

Lisbon, 5.2.91.

Concerning: Anniversary of 6 February letter of Mgr. Belo. Appeal for a Referendum, subscribed by almost 300 Catholic Bishops all over the world.

On 6 February last year Mgr. Manuel Martins, responding to an appeal from the Timorese Bishop Mgr. Ximenes Belo (and following the initiative of Bishop Soma from Japan, who gathered 118 letters of supporting Belo's appeal for a Referendum) sent a letter to numerous Catholic Bishops all over the world, as well as religious congregations, christian organizations, asking the United Nations Secretary General to promote the organization of a referendum for the East Timor people.

There was a considerable number of answers that reached us: 166 Bishops from 19 countries.

However the situation in the territory remains the same or still worse. The repression by the Indonesian invader has intensified in the last months. Recent news testify numerous arbitrary detentions, followed by torture, and several cases of disappearances.

Facing to this, the Portuguese Section of Pax Christi expresses its concern about this grave situation of violation of the human rights and the rights of the people.

At the same time, noticing the position of the UN regarding the invasion of Koweit, we cannot but express our astonishment before the existence of "two weights and two measures" by the international Community regarding the application of the International Law.

Concerning the situation in East Timor, it cannot be forgotten that just after the invasion of East Timor by Indonesia, the UN Security Council, in its Resolution 384, "appealed" Indonesia to retire without delay its troops from the territory. This Resolution was approved unanimously 15 years ago.

Concerning the problem of Koweit, the UN attitude was quite different as we all know.

Considering the expressed, the Portuguese Section of Pax Christi:

Condemns this double criteria for identical situations.

Affirms its conviction that not with bombs can we build a New International Order.

Affirms that not ignoring or forgetting the injustices perpetrated by powerful countries against smaller and weeker ones can a just and lasting peace be achieved.

Considers that the UN to be in accordance with its goals and mandate must deal in truth and justice with the East Timor issue.

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Supporting this position, adopts the statement addressed by the Pope to the Diplomatic Representatives near the Vatican, on 12/1/91, about the Gulf question: "It is not acceptable that the law of the stronger be imposed to the weeker". And also his recommendation for "an international consensus where all the parties involved be present and cooperate with loyalty and serenity".

May this be a reality concerning the Gulf War !

May this be a reality concerning the invasion and occupation of East Timor !

In view of this, the Portuguese Section of Pax Christi, following the request of Mgr. Ximenes Belo, the subsequent appeal of Mgr. Martins, and all those who subscribed this demand, continues to insist near the UN on behalf of a referendum for the East Timor people. The Timorese people must be allowed to exercise their legitimate right to selfdetermination, recognized by the UN, and freely express their wish regarding their own future.

The Portuguese Section of Pax Christi
The Vice-President

(Maria Luisa França)

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